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Somaliland election commission testing iris biometric-based voter registration system

By [Justin Lee](#)
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September 16, 2015 - The [National Election Commission of Somaliland](#) has begun testing an iris recognition-based voter registration system in preparation for a national election system, with the fourth trial voter records comprised of people in the Hargeisa and Togdheer regions, according to a report by [Somaliland Press](#).

The move comes a year after the Somaliland government's election experts approached [University of Notre Dame's biometric research group](#), led by Kevin Bowyer, to develop the biometric system to improve the accuracy of its election process.

At the time, Bowyer said the NEC of Somaliland was looking "to create a fraud-free voter registration list" in which it "turned to biometrics as a means to generate such a list."

If implemented, the iris-based biometric system would be one of the most advanced voter registration systems in the world, according to Abdikadir Iman Warsame, chairman of the NEC of Somaliland.

"It's high time the new voter's registration system is put in place the upcoming presidential and parliamentary national elections, in order to be fully prepared when that time comes," said Warsame.

Bowyer and his team developed algorithms that are able to accurately identify individuals who have previously registered, regardless of whether they are wearing different coloured or textured contact lenses.

"Fingerprint might seem like an obvious choice for biometric verification of a voting register, but it runs into problems with the percentage of the population for which an acceptable quality image can be obtained," said Bowyer.

This weakness regarding fingerprint readers can be exploited by individuals looking to commit voter fraud by registering multiple times.

In a biometric voter registration exercise conducted in 2008-09, the NEC of Somaliland used fingerprints and facial recognition to effectively clean the voting register.

In a 2010 report, the Electoral Reform International Services for the NEC of Somaliland found that "this register is known to contain a large number of duplicates, possibly around 30%, and the existing biometric systems could not identify these with the data

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helped to convince the NEC of Somaliland that iris recognition was a feasible solution.

"Data acquisition for the field study was conducted over a five-day period in two registration centres: one in the Somaliland capital, Hargeisa, and one in Baki, a small town about 60 miles from Hargeisa," said Bowyer. "The data was transferred electronically to our research group at Notre Dame, where we performed the iris recognition analysis, and then reported our results back."

According to Notre Dame University, Somaliland will proceed to create a new national voting register to be used in the next elections.

The biometrically validated voting register is said to be one of the most technically sophisticated voting registers in the world, which researchers hope will lead to more transparent and believable election results.

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ABOUT JUSTIN LEE

Justin Lee has been a contributor with Biometric Update since 2014. Previously, he was a staff writer for web hosting magazine and website, theWHIR. For more than a decade, Justin has written for various publications on issues relating to technology, arts and culture, and entertainment. Follow him on Twitter [@BiometricJustin](#).

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GenKey's biometric ID solutions deployed for voter registration in Tanzania

genkey-
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identification

By [Justin Lee](#)

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September 8, 2015 - [GenKey](#) announced that the Tanzanian government has deployed its biometric identification solutions for its upcoming national elections, including its Voter ID Management Solution (SPIRE), Automated Biometric Identification Solution (ABIS) for deduplication, and Adjudication solutions.

The government conducted a voter registration exercise in advance of the elections, in which it biometrically enrolled and registered 24 million eligible Tanzanian voters in the Permanent Voter Register (PVR).

GenKey's large-scale biometric-based deduplication solution was chosen to ensure that each voter is enrolled only once.

The GenKey SPIRE voter ID management solution provides the capabilities to set up and maintain the electoral landscape, upload and manage the voter registration data, and compile an accurate and credible voter register.

"With large-scale biometric deployments throughout the world, we are delighted to also assist the National Election Committee of Tanzania in this important project to ensure credible and transparent elections," said GenKey CEO Michiel van der Veen.

Lithotech Exports of South Africa, the firm that was awarded the contract by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of Tanzania, subcontracted the project to GenKey.

Previously reported, the Tanzanian government officially endorsed the National Electoral Commission's plans to use a [biometric electoral system](#) for the country's 2015 elections.

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ABOUT JUSTIN LEE

Justin Lee has been a contributor with Biometric Update since 2014. Previously,

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10/1/2015

https://mail.gov.in/iwc_static/layout/shell.html?lang=en-US&3.0.1.0.0_16051217

Subject: Application filed by RBI in the Hon'ble Supreme Court seeking
confirmation on its Interim Order dated August 11, 2015
debus@eci.gov.in

Date: 09/30/15 06:09 PM
From: YLP Rao <ylprao@uidai.gov.in>

Aadhaar - application filed by RBI in SC - Part 1... (4.5MB)
Aadhaar - application filed by RBI in SC - Part 3... (1.8MB)

Aadhaar - application filed by RBI in SC - Part 2... (3.8MB)

Dear Sri.Umesh ji,

As discussed I am sending you scan copy of application filed by RBI in the subject matter above.

REgards
YLP Rao

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Rajan Agasth

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2

mandatory to use Aadhaar Card only, for opening a bank account and that it is only one of the documents that can be used by the customer as an Officially Valid Document for opening a bank account under Rule 9 of the Prevention of Money-Laundering (Maintenance of Records) Rules, 2005 and that the apprehension of the petitioner that a bank account cannot be opened without Aadhaar Card is not correct. The counter affidavit filed by this Applicant may be treated as an integral part of this application.

3. This Hon'ble Court has by its Order dated August 11, 2015 expressed the opinion that jurisprudential correctness of the previous decisions of this Hon'ble Court where the right of privacy is either asserted or referred have to be examined and authoritatively decided by a Bench of appropriate strength and has accordingly directed the Registry to place the matters before the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India for appropriate orders.

4. This Hon'ble Court has passed an Interim Order dated August 11, 2015, inter alia, directing as follows:

"The Unique Identification Number or the Aadhaar Card will not be used by the respondents for any purpose other than the PDS Scheme and in particular for the purpose of distribution of foodgrains; etc. and cooking fuel, such as kerosene. The Aadhaar Card may also be used for the purpose of the LPG Distribution Scheme;"

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A copy of the said Interim Order dated 11.08.2015

It is submitted that the intent of the said order is apparently to facilitate the continuation of the implementation of social benefit schemes. However, the opening portion of the above order could be interpreted to the effect that Aadhar Card number cannot be used for other social benefit schemes.

5. It is submitted that for the successful implementation of the social benefit schemes referred to in the above order, opening and operation of bank accounts for availing various financial services would also be necessary. The key driver of our country's vision of inclusive growth is financial inclusion. Financial inclusion may be defined as the process of ensuring access to appropriate financial products and services needed by vulnerable groups such as, weaker sections and low income groups at an affordable cost in a fair and transparent manner by mainstream institutional players.

6. In accordance with the vision of inclusive growth, this Applicant has adopted a "bank-led" model for financial inclusion to provide low cost, efficient, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based banking services. Aadhaar Card plays a vital role in implementing the mission of financial inclusion.

7. It is respectfully submitted that the possibility of the above order being interpreted as prohibiting banks from accepting Aadhaar Cards, even if voluntarily submitted by customers, for opening bank account or for availing financial services etc., cannot be ruled out. Therefore, this application is being filed by this Applicant for an order to the effect that the above order should not be interpreted as prohibiting banks from accepting Aadhaar Cards, even if voluntarily submitted by customers, for opening bank account or for availing financial services etc., cannot be ruled out. Therefore, this application is being filed by this Applicant for an order to the effect that the above order should not be interpreted as prohibiting banks from accepting Aadhaar Cards, even if voluntarily submitted by customers, for opening bank account or for availing financial services etc., cannot be ruled out.

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9. It is submitted that the Applicant has issued various guidelines from time to time to banks and other regulated entities regarding voluntary use of Aadhaar Card by customers for opening bank accounts and availing other financial services. These guidelines are consolidated every year and a Master Circular dated July 1 is issued each year. One such Master Circular issued on July 1, 2014 has been filed along with the counter affidavit dated July 20, 2015 and marked as Annexure R-IV/ 1.

10. It is submitted that taking into account the benefit of the Aadhaar Card, this Applicant has advised the banks and other financial institutions to accept the letter issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) containing the details of name, address and Aadhaar number, the e-KYC service of UIDAI and e-Aadhaar downloaded from the website of UIDAI as one of the Officially Valid Documents for the purpose of opening of accounts. This Applicant has issued similar instructions to other category of regulated entities also.

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भुवनेश्वर/वि. एन.ए.सी. रा.
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11. It is submitted that the data from www.pmidy.gov.in as on August 12, 2015 shows that 7.27 crore accounts were seeded with Aadhaar out of total 17.57 crore accounts opened under the scheme. In addition, data received from National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) shows that approximately 20 crore accounts have been linked with Aadhaar. It is further submitted that e-KYC is a very cost effective and robust system of KYC process for both members of public and banks. This Hon'ble Court has

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individuals should not be prevented from voluntarily submitting the same for the purpose of establishing their identity for availing various services including opening of banks accounts. Consequently, the banks, financial institutions, payment system operators etc. may not be prevented from accepting Aadhaar Card from person who voluntarily submit the same for the purpose of proving their identity.

15. It is submitted that the Applicant has issued certain guidelines regarding seeding Aadhaar Card numbers to bank accounts for implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme (DBT Scheme). A copy of one such circular dated 10.05.2013 is annexed hereto and marked as ANNEXURE R-IV/2 ^(P-19-20) and a copy of another circular dated 09.07.2013 is annexed hereto and marked as ANNEXURE R-IV/3 ^(P-21-22). This helps in seamless transmission of the benefits of social benefit schemes to the account holders directly.

As defined by UIDAI in their "Standard Protocol covering the Approach & Process for seeding Aadhaar Numbers in Service Delivery Databases",

"Aadhaar seeding is a process by which Aadhaar numbers of residents are included in the service delivery database of service providers for enabling de-duplication of database and Aadhaar based authentication during service delivery. The objective of de-duplication is not to replace the currently used unique identifier of the customers/residents/beneficiaries with Aadhaar but it is to clean up the databases for any

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[Signature]

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9

submitted that in view of the fact that a major portion of the population has Aadhaar card, the process of seeding Aadhaar Card numbers to bank accounts needs to be continued in the interests of inclusive growth, financial inclusion and social justice to the poor.

17. The banks and other financial institutions are required to know their customers before opening an account. This helps in preventing frauds. Aadhaar Card is one of the documents which can be used by the customers for proving their identity. As submitted above, the directions and circulars issued by this Applicant do not make it compulsory for the customers to use Aadhaar Cards for opening accounts. It is open to the customers to use passport, driving license, voter identity card, PAN card etc., which are also 'Officially Valid Documents'. However, as noted by this Hon'ble Court in the Interim Order dated 11.08.2015, 90% of the population of India has been issued Aadhaar Card and it is possible that an individual may have only Aadhaar Card and not any other Officially Valid Document for the purpose of proving his identity for the purpose of opening of accounts in banks etc. If a person has voluntarily obtained Aadhaar Card and then chooses to produce the same before a bank for opening account, there is no reason for preventing the banks and financial institutions from accepting Aadhaar Card from such person in the absence of any other document or otherwise. It is also pertinent to note that Aadhaar Card may be the only officially valid document possessed by a large number of persons. As such, there is no reason to require bank and financial institute to decline to accept Aadhaar Card from a person who voluntarily submits the same.

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18. In the above Interim Order this Hon'ble Court has noted the

115
7
individuals should not be prevented from voluntarily submitting the same for the purpose of establishing their identity for availing various services including opening of banks accounts. Consequently, the banks, financial institutions, payment system operators etc. may not be prevented from accepting Aadhaar Card from person who voluntarily submit the same for the purpose of proving their identity.

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9

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18. In the above Interim Order this Hon'ble Court has noted the

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above order could result in unintended inconvenience to the general public.

In the premises, it is most humbly prayed that this Hon'ble Court may be pleased to pass an Order;

- (i) to clarify that the Interim Order dated 11.08.2015, does not preclude the banks from verifying and accepting valid Aadhaar Card as identification of customer, in case so desired by the customer;
- (ii) to clarify that the Interim Order dated 11.08.2015 does not preclude the banks/financial institution, payment systems from verifying and accepting a valid Aadhaar Card from customers wanting to avail banking/financial services, in case so desired by the customers.
- (iii) to clarify that the Interim Order dated 11.08.2015 does not preclude the banks from seeding valid Aadhaar Card numbers to bank accounts of customers for receiving Government subsidy or other remittances, in case so desired by the customers.
- (iv) this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the nature and circumstances of this case.

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AS IN DUTY BOUND SHALL EVER PRAY.

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4. I say that the Annexures filed along with the Application are true copies of the original thereof.

SOLEMNLY AFFIRMED AT NEW DELHI
THIS THE 27TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2015.

DEPONENT

VERIFICATION:

I, the deponent above named, do hereby verify that the statements of facts contained in this affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and nothing material has been concealed.

Verified at New Delhi, this the 27th day of August, 2015.

DEPONENT

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Rajan Agarwal

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All the matters require to be heard finally. List all matters for final hearing after the Constitution Bench is over.

In the meanwhile, no person should suffer for not getting the Aadhaar card inspite of the fact that some authority had issued a circular making it mandatory and when any person applies to get the Aadhaar card voluntarily, it may be checked whether that person is entitled for it under the law and it should not be given to any illegal immigrant."

It was submitted by Shri Shyam Divan, learned counsel for the petitioners that the petitioners having pointed out a serious breach of privacy in their submissions, preceding the reference, this Court may grant an injunction restraining the authorities from proceeding further in the matter of obtaining biometrics etc. for an Aadhaar card. Shri Shyam Divan submitted that the biometric information of an individual can be circulated to other authorities or corporate bodies which, in turn can be used by them for commercial exploitation and, therefore, must be stopped.

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Rajan Agarwal
Joint Secretary/Section Officer
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The learned Attorney General pointed out, on the other hand, that this Court has at no point of time, even while making the interim order dated 23.9.2013 granted an injunction restraining the Unique Identification Authority of India from going ahead and obtaining biometric or other information from a citizen for the purpose of a Unique Identification Number, better known as "Aadhaar card". It was further submitted that the respondents

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respondent Union of India would ensure that Aadhaar cards would only be issued on a consensual basis after informing the public at large about the fact that the preparation of Aadhaar card involving the parting of biometric information of the individual, which shall however not be used for any purpose other than a social benefit schemes.

Having considered the matter, we are of the view that the balance of interest would be best served, till the matter is finally decided by a larger Bench if the Union of India or the UIDA proceed

TRUE CERTIFIED COPY in the following manner:-

अवधूत/RAJAN AGARWAL
अधीक्षक/Section Officer
एन सी ई आयोग
En-Commission of India
अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली 110001
Ashoka Road, N. Delhi-110001

The Union of India shall give wide publicity in the electronic and print media including radio and television networks that it is not mandatory for a citizen to obtain an Aadhaar card;

2. The production of an Aadhaar card will not be condition for obtaining any benefits otherwise due to a citizen;

3. The Unique Identification Number or the Aadhaar card will not be used by the respondents for any purpose other than the PDS Scheme and in particular for the purpose of distribution of foodgrains, etc. and cooking fuel, such as kerosene. The Aadhaar card may also be used for the purpose of the LPG Distribution Scheme;

4. The information about an individual obtained by the Unique

18

Identification Authority of India while issuing an Aadhaar card shall not be used for any other purpose, save as above, except as may be directed by a Court for the purpose of criminal investigation.

Ordered accordingly.

.....J.
(J. Chelameswar)

.....J.
(S.A. Bobde)

.....J.
(C. Nagappan)

New Delhi
August 11, 2015

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Rajan Rajan

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Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India
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2

4. The SLBC Convenor banks shall submit a monthly statement of district wise progress made in implementing DBT from the month ended April 30, 2013 as per the enclosed format in EXCEL by the 10th of the succeeding month to the respective Regional Office of Reserve Bank.

Yours faithfully;

Sd/-

(A. Udgata)

Principal Chief General Manager

Encl: Format

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- Yours faithfully,

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